

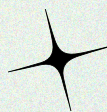
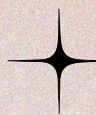


TOP 6

MISLEADING

FOOD LABELS

Contents









Intro

If all foods could live up to the claims they make on their packaging, we'd be one healthy population! Unfortunately, food and nutrition labels often cause much confusion for grocery shoppers. In fact, nearly 59% of consumers have a hard time understanding nutrition labels.

Marketers use a variety of tricks to make foods seem healthier and more appealing than their competitors, particularly when it comes to products aimed at children. One of the most powerful advertising tools a food manufacturer has is the packaging, as it's what we look at immediately before deciding which food to purchase.

A speech bubble graphic with a black outline and a tail pointing towards the bottom right. The text inside is bold and black.

**6 food claims you
don't want to get
tricked by**



1. ‘Natural’

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration **does not define** how **the term** “natural” or “all natural” gets used. In fact, the FDA only requires it to mean “nothing artificial or synthetic (including all color additives regardless of source) has been included in, or has been added to, a food that would not normally be expected to be in that food.”

A food labeled natural may contain preservatives — or even get injected with sodium in the case of raw chicken. “Some natural products will have high fructose corn syrup and companies will argue that since it comes from corn, it’s healthy,” Stephan Gardner of the Center of Science in the Public Interest told Health. “Well, that isn’t true.”

definitions

Use of the Term Natural on Food Labeling

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Food Labeling & Nutrition

FDA Nutrition Innovation Strategy

Label Claims for Food & Dietary Supplements

Menu and Vending Machine Labeling

Gluten-Free Labeling of Foods

Changes to the Nutrition Facts Label

Nutrition Labeling Information for Restaurants & Retail Establishments

Food Allergies

Nutrition Education Resources & Materials

The comment period closed May 10, 2016. View submitted comments in docket folder [FDA-2014-N-1207](#) on [Regulations.gov](#).

The FDA Requests Comments on Use of the Term "Natural" on Food Labeling

Because of the changing landscape of food ingredients and production, and in direct response to consumers who have requested that the FDA explore the use of the term "natural," the agency asked the public to provide information and comments on the use of this term in the labeling of human food products.

The FDA took this action in part because it received three Citizen Petitions asking that the agency define the term "natural" for use in food labeling and one Citizen Petition asking that the agency prohibit the term "natural" on food labels. We also note that some Federal courts, as a result of litigation between private parties, have requested administrative determinations from the FDA regarding whether food products containing ingredients produced using genetic engineering or foods containing high fructose corn syrup may be labeled as "natural."

Although the FDA has not engaged in rulemaking to establish a formal definition for the term "natural," we do have a longstanding policy concerning the use of "natural" in human food labeling. The FDA has considered the term "natural" to mean that nothing artificial or synthetic (including all color additives regardless of source) has been included in, or has been added to, a food that would not normally be expected to be in that food. However, this policy was not intended to address food production methods, such as the use of pesticides, nor did it explicitly address food processing or manufacturing methods, such as thermal technologies, pasteurization, or irradiation. The FDA also did not consider whether the term "natural" should describe any nutritional or other health benefit.

Specifically, the FDA asked for information and public comment on questions such as:

Content current as of: 10/22/2018

Regulated Product(s): Food & Beverages



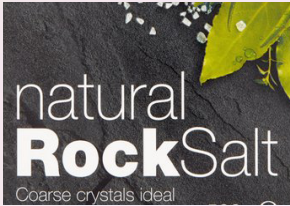
United States Department of Agriculture
Food Safety and Inspection Service

Meat and Poultry Labeling Terms

NATURAL:

A product containing no artificial ingredient or added color and is only minimally processed. Minimal processing means that the product was processed in a manner that does not fundamentally alter the product. The label must include a statement explaining the meaning of the term natural (such as "no artificial ingredients; minimally processed").

'Natural' claim





* **natural** ≠ **healthy**

Even if the government defines the term ‘natural’, it wouldn’t mean the same as ‘healthy’.

Lawsuits have argued that genetically-modified crops can’t be called ‘natural’, but plenty of evidence shows they’re safe to eat. And while some food additives can be dangerous, most of them are safe, at least according to the Center for Science in the Public Interest.

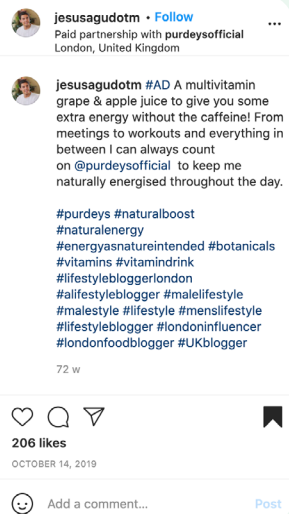


The bigger risk when it comes to processed foods may not be their synthetic additives, but the perfectly natural ingredients that get thrown in in surprisingly high amounts.

The CSPI says there are two things that cause more harm than all the food additives combined: salt and sugar.



'Natural' claim



@jesusagudotm

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Jesus Agudo | London Blogger

👤 Creative Consultant & Branding Coach

🧘 Mindfulness & Conscious Lifestyle

💡 Discovering the best in the world everyday

'natural energy'

influencer marketing



@aliveliveing

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Alice - Daily Live Workouts

🏆 QUALIFIED PT

📖 3x Bestselling Author

🎧 @womenshealthuk Columnist

💖 @womens_aid Ambassador

🎧 Give Me Strength podcast

'super thick natural'



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aliveliveing • ADJ WIN A YEAR'S SUPPLY OF YOGURT FOR YOU AND A FRIEND!

I have and always will be a big fan of thick and creamy yogurt for a filling snack. The combinations are endless in terms of what you can mix it with, and it's great to have in the fridge for a hungry moment.

I've recently been loving @yeovalley new Super Thick Kernald Yogurt which is deliciously rich and creamy, and is strained up to nine times in a process called kerning. It's high in protein and comes in both 0% and 5% varieties, and their pots are made from 100% recycled plastic and card.



7,196 likes

JUNE 12, 2020



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Post



2. ‘No added sugars’ / ‘Low sugar’

While we don’t have absolute evidence that sweeteners are bad for your health, what we do know now as they do change your brain chemistry and make you crave more unhealthy foods throughout the day.

In order to make their products seem healthier and more appealing, food companies may sometimes swap out regular sugar for an alternative sweetener instead. According to

**be mindful
of artificial
sweeteners**

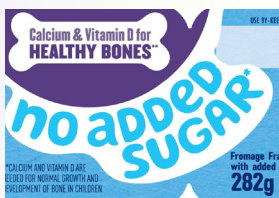
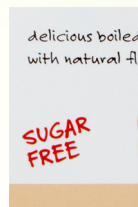
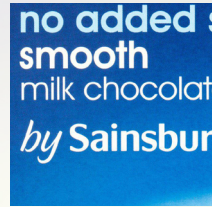
Healthline, these alternative sweetening options are often unrefined and are made from the sap, fruit, flowers or seeds of plants, which one example being agave nectar. While products that use these alternative sweeteners can proudly declare that they are ‘contain no refined sugar’, all this really means is that the food doesn’t contain any white sugar specifically. On one hand, these sweeteners usually have slightly lower glycemic index than refined white sugar, but even so, they still contain very **little nutritional value and still equate to mostly empty calories.** Even unrefined added sugar is still added sugar, and you should try to limit your intake if you’re trying to eat healthily.



Zero grams of sugar added. It's a great thing, but you still need to check the nutrition facts for the naturally occurring sugar. It may also appear in excessively high amounts.

**limit natural
sugar too!**

'No added sugars' claim





‘No added sugars’ claim



Nutrition

Typical Values	Per 100 g
Energy (kJ)	1482 kJ
Energy (kcal)	355 kcal
Fat	13,2 g
of which saturates	7,5 g
Carbohydrates	20,2 g
of which sugars	4,9 g
of which polyols	13,6 g
Fiber	14,2 g
Protein	38,6 g

**low in sugar
but high in
sweeteners**

influencer marketing



@marikaday

2,155 posts

75k followers

686 following

Marika Day - Dietitian

Nutritionist

♥ Australian Nutritionist + Dietitian (APD)

♥ Founder @gutstarted

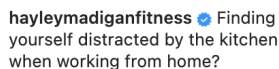
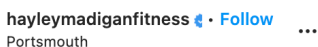
♥ Coeliac

‘No added sugars’ claim

salted caramel



high protein.



I've worked from home for the last 3 years and at first I struggled! But now I have an established routine and these are my top tips to help you all 🙌

1) Don't work directly from the kitchen
- I used to set my laptop up on the dining table so I close to the kettle but it meant I just kept looking in the cupboards and continuously snacking

2) Set yourself breaks where you leave your laptop and go into another room to enjoy a meal or a drink.



1,377 likes

MARCH 20, 2020



Post



Nutrition

Typical Values	Per 100g
Energy (kJ)	1572
Energy (kcal)	376
Fat	16 g
of which saturates	9.2 g
Carbohydrate	34 g
of which sugars	2.5 g
Polyols	25 g
Fibre	4.1 g
Protein	33 g
Salt	0.48 g

25g sweeteners per 100g!

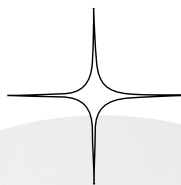
'Low fat' / 'Zero fat'



Just because a package says it has low or no fat **doesn't make it automatically healthier.** A lot of manufacturers also substitute extra sugar to maintain the taste when they take out fat, or vice versa. "Just because it says it's fat-free, doesn't mean you get a free ride," Taub-Dix told Health. When in doubt, read the entire label.

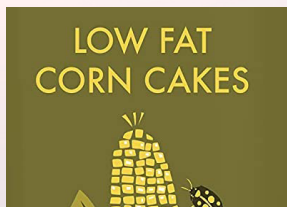
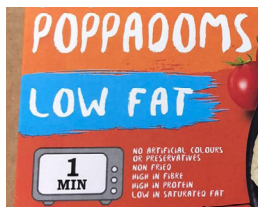
A lot of us mistakenly consider all fats unhealthy, but you really just want to avoid trans fats. Doctors consider trans fat bad for your heart, and you really want to consume zero. But products that say "zero trans fat" can actually contain up to 0.5 grams per serving.

"If a product says 0 trans fat on it, **it isn't actually at zero.**" Gardner told Health. "If the consumer were to have two servings, then you would get a good amount added to your diet." By cutting down on processed foods, you will also avoid trans fats.



'Low fat' claim





'Low fat' claim

light amore



Ingredients

Yogurt (Milk), Water, **Sugar**, Lemon Juice from Concentrate (2%), Modified Maize Starch, Lemon Cells (0.5%), Stabiliser: Pectins, **Sweetener: Aspartame**, Flavourings, Colour: Curcumin

**low in fat but
high in sugar**



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Bristol, United Kingdom

...



emmakateblogs Good food equals good mood! 🍋😋

Lemon muller light amore (70cals or 1 syn on SW) Raspberries (10cal) Biscoff biscuit (50cal/2.5syn) Lindt milk choc square (60cal/3syms) . 190 calories ~ 6.5syms

Do I even need to say how nice this was.... it was LUSH! 🍋

#mullerlight #yogurt #fruit
#cheesecake #pudding #dessert
#swmafia #sw #www #weightlossjourney
#foodism #foodies #foodiegram
#foodiesofinstagram #bristolfoodie
#foodgoals #yummyfood
#slimmingworlduk #breakfast
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JULY 14, 2020



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🍋 BRISTOL FOODIE

🍋 FIRST TIME MUM TO TODDLER ELLIOT

🍋 CALORIE COUNTING CHOCOHOLIC





4. ‘Less bad stuff than...’

Unfinished claims tell us the product is better than something – but not better than what. In food labelling, we really have to hunt for the “what”.

For instance, “reduced sugar” is a confused term. It depends on what manufacturer takes as a “regular” example to compare it’s own product. Manufacturer for example might have whole line of products, one’s that are “regular” with certain amounts of added sugars, and others that are labeled as “reduced sugar” compared to regular ones. “Reduced sugar” alone doesn’t say much without context.

Smiths’ Thinly Cut potato chips contain 75% less fat than “chips cooked in 100% Palmolein Oil”. But they don’t contain less fat than Original Thins, Kettle, or most other brands on the market.

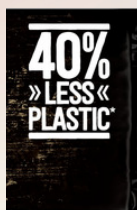
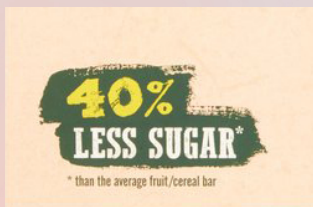
**75% less
saturated fat**

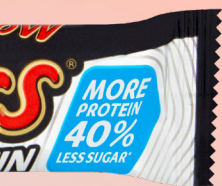


**but not 75% less
than other chips in
their range**

It's also worth taking a close look at the recommended serving size – in both cases the nutrition information is based on a 27g serving, but Smiths' "single serve" pack is 45g (15.7g fat; one-fifth of an average adult's recommended daily intake, or RDI).

'Less bad stuff than...' claim






‘Less bad stuff than...’ claim



40% less sugar




low in fat but
high in sugar



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 ...

Leeds






glutenfreegelder I absolutely love the new oat bars from @nairns oatcakes, have you tried them yet? 🍪

I've recently tried to be better at avoiding 'may contain' foods (I know I should be strict with this for my health and am working on it!), so have swapped the usual protein bar in my bag for one of these to grab when I'm out and about.


My favourite is the apple and cinnamon but they're all seriously good! Would definitely recommend 🍏


[#glutenfree](#) [#coeliac](#) [#vegetarian](#)
[#nairns](#) [#gifted](#)

93 w




209 likes

MAY 19, 2019


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glutenfreegelder

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Natasha | Gluten Free | Vegan
 Coeliac | Plants + Positivity | GF + VE Recipes
 I'm just here for the food 💜
 🇬🇧 Leeds, UK
 ♥ glutenfreegelder@gmail.com
www.glutenfreegelder.com

Nutrition

Typical Values	Per bar (40g)	Per 100g
Energy	707kJ	1767kJ
-	169kcal	422kcal
Fat	7.1g	17.7g
of which saturates	2.5g	6.2g
Carbohydrate	21.9g	54.7g
of which sugars	6.8g	17g
Fibre	3.2g	8.0g
Protein	2.8g	7.0g
Salt	0.17g	0.41g

'Gluten free' claim



‘Gluten free’

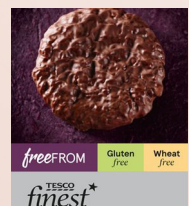


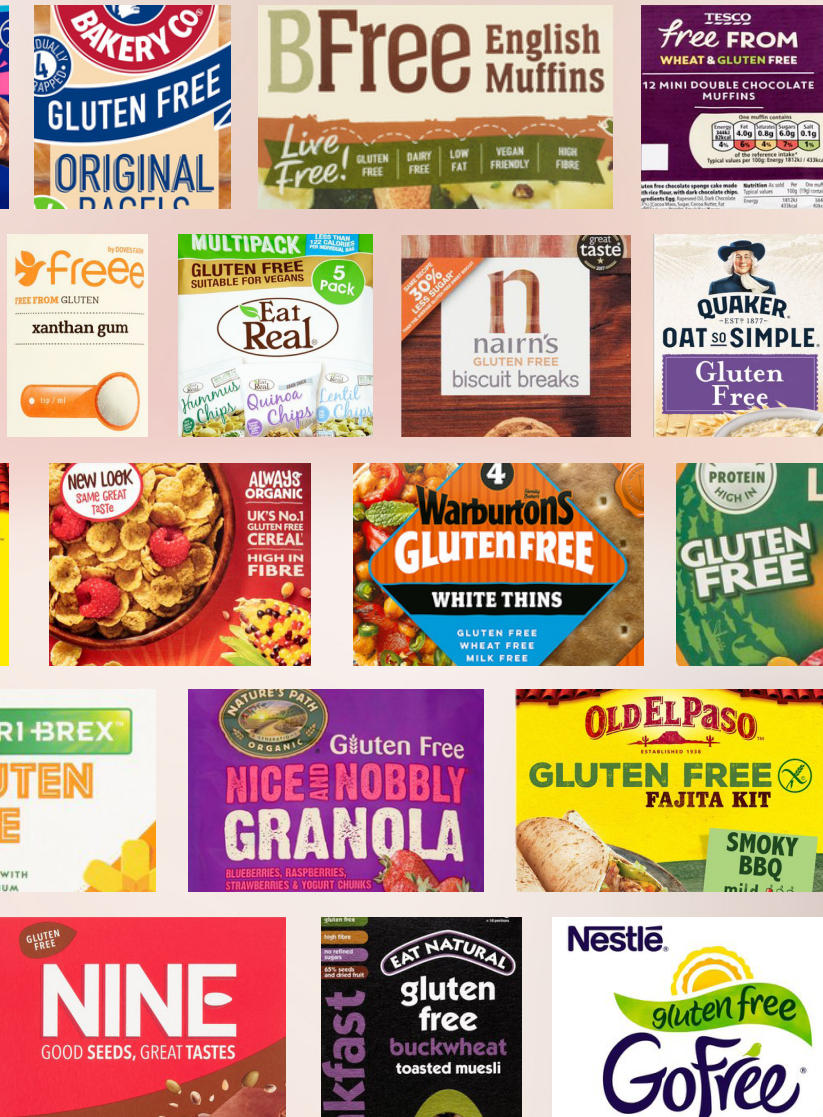
For those with Celiac disease or a gluten intolerance, “gluten-free” labels mean those products come safe to eat. But for the rest of us, it doesn’t really matter. Gluten poses **no danger to those without medical aversions to it.** A lot of manufacturers also put it on packages that would never have included gluten to begin with, just to attract sales.

What’s also wrong about this label is that there are many food products that proclaim they are “gluten-free” without ever containing gluten in the first place! If you see “gluten-free” on labels for food that **naturally contain no gluten,** take that as a sure sign someone wants to separate you from your money.



'Gluten free' claim







‘Gluten free’ claim






Nutrition



Typical Values	Per 100g
Energy	1903kJ
-	454kcal
Fat	22.0g
of which saturates	10.3g
Carbohydrate	43.9g
of which <u>sugars</u>	27.9g
Fibre	3.9g
Protein	18.4g

gluten free
but high in
sugar




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eattrek   @honestlyalessandra is making TREK the natural choice for a healthy snack 🍪💪 #youreanatural #trekkeepsmegoing #naturalenergy




65w


robustours Powered by trek 

65w 2 likes Reply



honestlyalessandra  I'm literally eating one right now 🍪

65w 2 likes Reply


  

92 likes

FEBRUARY 4, 2020

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Alessandra

My plantbased life in boxes... ✨

🌱 : Plantbased inspiration!

💌 : alessandra@honestlyalessandra.com

📺 : <https://youtu.be/D7URJeyguuk>

✨ : New video 📺

linktr.ee/honestlyalessandra

gluten free





6. ‘Weasel words’

Food packaging often contains words that imply the food contains certain ingredients, or has been prepared in a way, that makes it healthier (or at least better than similar foods).

But many of the words – such as “healthy” or “natural” – have **no** legal or formal **meaning**. While the Australian New Zealand Food Standards Code regulates the use of specific health and nutrient content claims, it doesn’t regulate or define these loose terms.

**protects your
well-being**

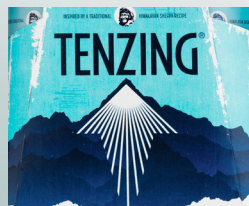
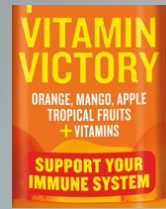
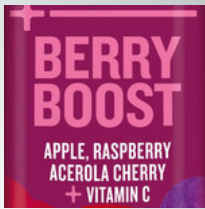
“Weasel claims” describe modifiers that negate the claims that follow them. This allows manufacturers to avoid allegations of breaching advertising or labelling regulations, while being such a commonly used word that it is overlooked by the consumer.

**immune
boosting**



gut friendly

'Weasel words'





'Weasel words'



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...



amyshock Morning guys, I'm usually not great in terms of keeping up with my micronutrients and supps. So it's been great to recently add @actimel_uk cultured shots into my diet. 🍓🥑 I have been having this shot with breakfast and it's an easy way for me to get in my fruit and veggies plus vitamins D & B6 to support my immune system. I've also been trying to be really strict with my protein intake as when I'm not I do find I crave junk food more and it affects my recovery massively. I also notice I don't look as lean 🙌 So hopefully implementing all the above will have me back on track nutrition wise, feeling better and recovering better 😊 #ad #actimel #culturedshot



381 likes

JUNE 11, 2020



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📺 new video 📺

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normal function of immune system



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London, United Kingdom



elvin #ad | COLOUR ME UP 🌈

I had my happiest 5K with Actimel's new Fruit & Veg Cultured Shots which helps to support my immune system with vitamins D& B6 🍌🥦🥬 it's my perfect on the go health boost 🍌
#ad #actimel #culturedshot #smoothie @actimel_uk

74 w



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74 w Renlv



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SEPTEMBER 28, 2019



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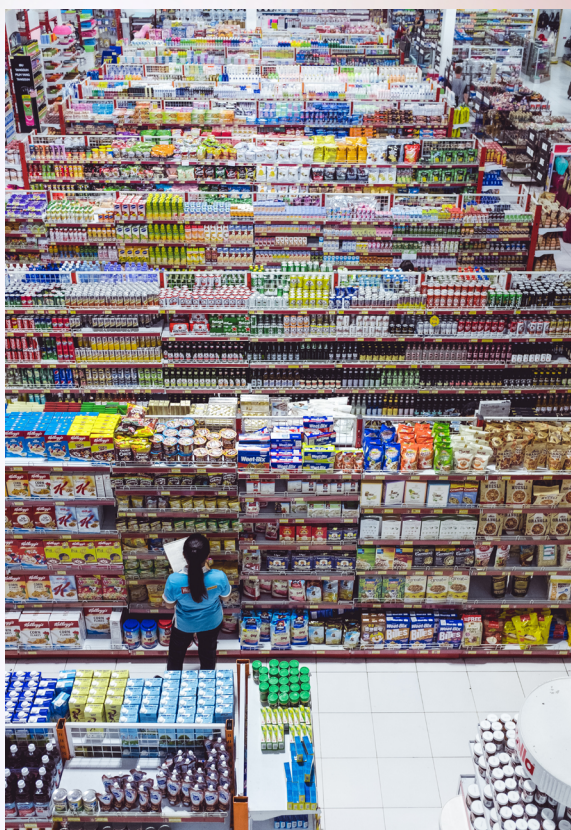
7. Other claims

Apart from those 6 there are a lot of other misleading claims you can find on food packagings. Everything from ‘hormone-free’ to ‘free range’ can also not mean anything. There are a few other examples below to look out for.

Made with real fruit. Even if the food product contains real fruit (versus fake fruit?) it may only be in minute amounts. So this claim doesn’t mean much. Better to stick to fruits you can actually see!

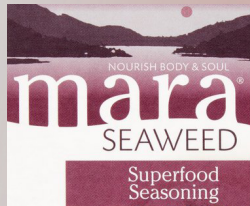
Superfoods and Superfruits. All plant-based foods are packed with vitamins, minerals and nutrients that are super for you. There is not one fruit or vegetable that supersedes the others. So, don’t let these superlatives deceive you.

Wheat or Multi-Grain. Just because the package says “wheat” or “multigrain” does not make it whole grain. Check the package for “100% whole grain” or “100% whole wheat.” You can also look for “whole” listed before the first ingredient in the Ingredients List.



**always check
nutrition facts**

Other claims





Colophon

Published in May 2021.

Designed by Maria Tokar.

Created for the MA Graphic Design programme 2020-2021 at the University of Reading.

The information used was found on theconversation.com, cheatsheet.com and ymcamidtn.org. The videos were found on youtube.com. QR codes contain links to the articles and videos are contained

All original images were sourced from flickr.com and unsplash.com.



